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RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
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SUBJECT: GOC

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UNICEF later confirmed to poloff that two of the presumed minors were verified to be adults (18 or over). Of the remaining two, one was indeed a minor while the other was 19, but unknown to the military, so both remained in UNICEF's care.

17. (SBU) On a similar August 22 trip to military camps in the eastern city of Abeche, UN interlocutors told poloff that the GOC message and actions were the same. In Abeche, three soldiers were presumed minors, immediately released to UNICEF, but later verified as adults.

SUSTAINED COMMITMENT

18. (SBU) General Idriss tasked delegation members with developing an action plan for the next six months. The original mission called for additional visits to military installation around the country, but when the logistics proved impossible, General Idriss felt that it was for the best. Word has gotten around, he stated, and if we wait another month or so, we will again have the element of surprise when we visit. He also expressed his interest in visiting refugee and IDP camps, an idea that UNICEF cautiously approved. The UNICEF representative stated that it must be a joint GOC-UN effort to verify the allegations of child recruitment already received by the UN. General Idriss respected UNICEF's warning that the camp not appear militarized by an independent Chadian military visit.

COMMENT

19. (SBU) The government conceived of this mission itself and put a very capable officer at its head. General Idriss took a firm line in each presentation and sincerely engaged in identifying possible child soldiers. The GOC recognizes that a cultural change is necessary for the custom of child soldiers to cease in Chad, but is committed to putting into practice the Chadian law that prohibits it. We are encouraged by these recent actions and the high-level

interest in developing, and (more importantly) implementing, an action plan. Poloff will participate in that effort. END COMMENT.

¶10. (U) Minimize considered.

NIGRO